

WASHINGTON DC, 1/9/07

Mr Speaker, on September 11th, 2001, my congressional district lost well over one hundred people; and tens of thousands of lives were shattered.

So it is on their behalf that I rise today and support passage of this bill, to implement the recommendations of the bipartisan 9-11 Commission.

I am grateful that the first bill to be passed in the first hours of a new majority is this one. Because America can't afford to wait another minute. We've had five and a half years of excuses, delays, postponements and lobbying. That's five and a half years too long.

Even today, Mr. Speaker, there are some who doubt we can meet the deadlines to screen air cargo in three years and shipping cargo in five years.

Mr. Speaker, America's greatest triumphs were not achieved by saying "it's too hard." They were secured by refusing to take no for an answer.

In 1962, five years after Sputnik was launched, John F. Kennedy said, "By the end of the decade we will land on the moon."

In 2007, over five years after 9-11, we are saying, "by the end of the decade we will screen all air cargo on our planes."

If we could research, develop, engineer and build the systems that lifted people into space, out of orbit, propel them to the moon, land them on the moon, bring them back to their capsule, return to earth, survive a fiery re-entry and deposit them safely in the ocean --then we should be able to figure out how to screen air cargo in a way that minimizes risk and inconvenience to

people who get on planes.

Mr. Speaker, when it came to securing America's place in the world, President Kennedy didn't say "I wish we could land a man on the moon but it's not easy enough, so instead we'll send a bus to Des Moines."

Mr. Speaker, when it came to preserving our national survival, President Roosevelt didn't say, "Yesterday was a day of infamy, so let's spend five and a half years figuring out how to respond with the least inconvenience to the American people."

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the safety and security of my constituents, there can be no more excuses, no further delay, no higher priority.

And to those who disagree with me, who earnestly and honorably believe we must continue to study feasibility and practicalities, I will share other words of President Kennedy, from that same speech when he told America we would go to the moon:

"We choose to go the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, an one which we intend to win, and the others, too."